R/V REGINA MARIS

— Ship to Shore News —

SEARCHLIGHT Vol. 8 No. 5 14 February 1983 Silver Bank

Just before sunset on the evening of 8 February, we motored out of Puerto Plata on glass calm seas and headed for Silver Bank, arriving the following morning. The weather changed abruptly on us during the night. The wind was blowing 25 knots from the north and the sky was ominously overcast as we motored slowly and cautiously toward our new landmark, the shipwreck Polyxeni. At 1616 we dropped anchor one and a quarter miles from the wreck and sent a crew in the deflatable boat over to see if it had been visited in our absence. It hadn't.

On an overcast and windy tenth of February, we made a day-long expedition to the wreck. On the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth of February we spent the days in pursuit of whales for tail photographs for the catalog. We have obtained over one hundred tail photos so far and have at least six matches--mostly with Newfoundland. At first it seemed as though the whales were not as numerous as in mid-February of previous years, but late on the thirteenth and today, Valentine's Day, they are everywhere around us. It is as if a new wave of whales has arrived. As the weather has been uniformly windy and sloppy and we have been operating in approximately the same area of the bank, I can only surmise that the whale numbers have actually increased. As soon as the wind drops to about 10 knots or less, we will conduct a census to estimate the magnitude of the increase. It will also be interesting to see if any recent tail matches are from areas other than Newfoundland.

Today we are working in the darkroom until the skies clear enough to safely navigate around the bank and pursue whales. We may not have to go far--several have come within a few feet of the ship and curiously looked us over. They were actually too close to photograph without an extremely wide-angle lens.

Respectfully submitted,

Evan Logan
ORV REGINA MARIS

SEARCHLIGHT Vol. 8 No. 6 11 March 1983 Silver Bank

Hours before the students were to arrive for this expedition, REGINA experienced a bit of bad luck. A heavy squall rolled into the harbor at Puerto Plata during the previous night. Although we hove to port on the anchor cable and ran extra lines ashore, the anchor dragged and the bow lines parted, causing REGINA to back into the pier, damaging two planks on the stern. Two carpenters from the local boat building yard were brought in to survey the damage. They promised to have the area cleaned up and repaired in four or five days.

For the new group of students, who faced an unexpected delay, our chief scientist, Ken Balcomb, proposed a field expedition to the humpback whale area in Samana Bay on the eastern end of the Dominican Republic. The students and staff spent two days there looking for whales, but the hired boat driver was reluctant to go close to the whales and proceeded to avoid the area where they were most likely to be found. The expedition returned on Saturday afternoon without having seen whales, but with lots of information on the conditions in Samana.

By Saturday the carpenters had finished repairs on REGINA's stern and were nearly ready to depart. It was, however, Independence Day weekend in the Dominican Republic and nothing was open for business. By Monday we were finally able to clear for Silver Bank and continue our whale studies.

Only two of our five days on the bank were good working days. We were cloud-bound for the other three, unable to maneuver because of poor visibility. We anchored, worked about the deck, and held classes. All was not lost in the cloudy weather, as a few curious whales came to visit and swim with us. We also were able to take the students over to explore the wrecks on the reef.

On Saturday afternoon, the fifth of March, we cautiously worked our way off the western edge of the Bank, aided by passages of sunshine. We then set sail for Puerto Plata and the end of Expedition 46B.

Respectfully submitted,

Evan Logan
ORV REGINA MARIS

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SPRING DAYSAIL: Saturday, 21 May

Our spring daysail will be held on May 21st, from Gloucester, Mass. In fairness to members who have not yet had a chance to sail with us, we will give preference to them, and fill remaining spots from a waiting list of members who have sail before.

If you wish to sign up for the daysail please fill in the slip below and mail it to the office. We will confirm your reservation by phone. To clarify the membership categories; one $25.00 membership is a SINGLE membership entitling that individual to one spot on the daysail. A $50.00 membership is a FAMILY membership entitling four people (immediate family members only) to sail. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Please don't bring toddlers under 5. Details concerning the daysail will be given to you over the phone when your reservation is confirmed.

ANNUAL MEETING AND PARTY: Saturday, 21 May

After the daysail, join us for our annual meeting and party on the evening of May 21st. Look for details in the next SEARCHLIGHT.

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